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Production Helpers assist more highly skilled production workers by performing tasks requiring limited knowledge of production processes. Duties include supplying or holding materials or tools, and cleaning the work area and equipment. Production Helpers start machines or equipment to begin the manufacturing process. They may set materials onto mechanical equipment for modifying or processing. Helpers mix or add substances to products as they progress through the mass-production process. Production Helpers observe manufacturing operations and notify equipment operators of malfunctions. They mark or tag identification on parts, read gauges and charts, and record production data. Helpers remove completed products, machine attachments, and waste material from machinery. They inspect finished products to ensure that they conform to company or government standards.

Tasks

- ▶ Clean and lubricate equipment.
- ▶ Signal coworkers to facilitate moving product, during processing.
- ▶ Measure amount of ingredients, length of extruded article, or work to ensure conformance to specifications.
- ▶ Replace damaged or worn equipment parts.
- ▶ Tend equipment to facilitate process.
- ▶ Mix ingredients, according to procedure.
- ▶ Turn valves to regulate flow of liquids or air, to reverse machine, to start pump, and to regulate equipment.

*Detailed descriptions of this occupation may be found in the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) at online.onetcenter.org.*

Important Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities

- ▶ Equipment Maintenance — Performing routine maintenance on equipment and determining when and what kind of maintenance is needed.
- ▶ Operation and Control — Controlling operations of equipment or systems.
- ▶ Equipment Selection — Determining the kind of tools and equipment needed to do a job.
- ▶ Repairing — Repairing machines or systems using the needed tools.

Production Helpers

- ▶ **Production and Processing** — Knowledge of raw materials, production processes, quality control, costs, and other techniques for maximizing the effective manufacture and distribution of goods.
- ▶ **Mechanical** — Knowledge of machines and tools, including their designs, uses, repair, and maintenance.
- ▶ **Manual Dexterity** — The ability to quickly move your hand, your hand together with your arm, or your two hands to grasp, manipulate, or assemble objects.
- ▶ **Control Precision** — The ability to quickly and repeatedly adjust the controls of a machine or a vehicle to exact positions.
- ▶ **Problem Sensitivity** — The ability to tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem.
- ▶ **Information Ordering** — The ability to arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to a specific rule or set of rules (e.g., patterns of numbers, letters, words, pictures, mathematical operations).

Work Environment

Most Production Helpers work indoors in large manufacturing plants or sometimes outdoors on loading docks. Work spaces are usually clean, well lit, and well ventilated. Production Helpers work on their feet most of the day and must be able to do moderately heavy lifting, pushing, and pulling, etc. While working outdoors they may experience the discomforts of extreme weather conditions, such as very hot or cold temperatures. Production Helpers are also exposed to hazardous and powerful high-speed machines, and noise levels that may be uncomfortable. However, the work is generally safe for those who take reasonable care, use protective equipment, and adhere to safety rules. Most Production Helpers usually work a 40-hour work week. However, many large companies operate two or three shifts. Production Helpers may be required to work any shift including weekends and holidays. They may also work overtime to meet deadlines.

California's Job Outlook and Wages

The California Outlook and Wage table below represents the occupation across all industries.

Standard Occupational Classification	Estimated Number of Workers 2004	Estimated Number of Workers 2014	Average Annual Openings	2006 Wage Range (per hour)
Production Helpers				
51-9198	45,100	50,900	1,850	\$8.03 to \$11.60

Wages do not reflect self-employment.

Average annual openings include new jobs plus net replacements.

Source: www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov, Employment Projections by Occupation and OES Employment & Wages by Occupation, Labor Market Information Division, Employment Development Department.

Trends

Employment of Production Helpers is expected to grow slower than average for all occupations over the 2004-2014 period. However, opportunities will continue to arise from the need to replace the Production Helpers who retire or leave the labor force for other reasons.

Training/Requirements/Apprenticeships

Production Helpers usually follow one of the following training paths:

- ▶ High school diploma or equivalent
- ▶ On-the-job training

Recommended High School Course Work

High school preparation courses in language arts, mathematics, machine shop, and computer technology are helpful.

Where Do I Find the Job?

Direct application to employers remains one of the most effective job search methods.

Use the *Search for Employers by Industry* feature on the *Career Center* page at www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov to locate employers in your area. Search under the following manufacturing industry names to get a list of private firms and their addresses:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ▶ Automotive Body and Interior Repair | ▶ Commercial Screen Printing |
| ▶ Automotive Exhaust System Repair | ▶ Employment Placement Agencies |
| ▶ Automotive Glass Replacement Shops | ▶ General Automotive Repair |
| ▶ Automotive Transmission Repair | ▶ Other Automotive Mechanical Repair |
| ▶ Car Washes | ▶ Other Commercial Printing |
| ▶ Commercial Lithographic Printing | ▶ Temporary Help Services |

Search these **yellow page** headings for listings of private firms:

- | | |
|---|--|
| ▶ Die Makers | ▶ Pattern Makers |
| ▶ Manufacturers' Agents & Representatives | ▶ Plastics Fabricators |
| ▶ Metal Fabricators | ▶ Plastics-Molders-Injection |
| ▶ Metal Specialties | ▶ Plastics-Raw Materials-Colorants-Compounds |
| ▶ Metal Stamping | |

Where Can the Job Lead?

Advancement opportunities for Production Helpers are a bit limited. However, with increased experience individuals may advance to a general production worker. Those with leadership skills and who continue to learn new skills may advance to team leader, or supervisory positions, or to a production coordinator.

Other Sources of Information

National Association of Manufacturers
www.nam.org

International Warehouse Logistics Association
www.iwla.com

